



Chicago Mountaineering Club

The next CMC General Meeting will be on **Monday, November 18, 2002, at 8:00 PM** at the Field Museum of Natural History. The presentation shall feature the climbs of Danny Bobrow and be given by the man himself.

The next CMC Board meeting is scheduled for **Monday, November 18, 2002, 6:30 PM at the Field Museum.**

Our General Meeting is open to the public, held on the third Monday of each month, September through May. Everyone is welcome. We have a short business meeting, followed by our featured program presentation.

2002 CMC Board Members

Ron Rolnicki

President – president@cmcwebsite.org

Dan Bobrow

Vice President – vicepres@cmcwebsite.org

Steve Capps

Secretary – secretary@cmcwebsite.org

Chris Young

Treasurer – treasurer@cmcwebsite.org

Mark Mummer

Sergeant at Arms – sergeantatarms@cmcwebsite.org

Jochen Bachmann

Outings Chair – outings@cmcwebsite.org

Ben Kweton

Program Chair – programs@cmcwebsite.org

Pawel Szymanski

Publications Chair – publications@cmcwebsite.org

Matthew Mead

Conservation Chair – conservation@cmcwebsite.org

Technology Chair – webmaster@cmcwebsite.org

Alex Andrews

Grounds Chair – grounds@cmcwebsite.org

William Dietrich

Safety Chair – safety@cmcwebsite.org

Pieter Fockens

Director – directors@cmcwebsite.org

Open

Expedition Chair – expedition@cmcwebsite.org

Announcements

Welcome!

Please welcome our newest members:

Tom Solie of Rockford, IL

Zac Yates of Naperville, IL

John Peirce of Portage, MI

CMC Website

Thanks to the valiant efforts of the Technology Chair, Matt Mead, the CMC web site, www.cmcwebsite.org, has been updated to include a new member-only section. Within this new password protected section of the site, you will find many new features. To access these resources please refer to the personalized letter containing your Login ID, Temporary Password, and explicit directions for using this new section.

If you do not have Internet access from home or place of work, try visiting a nearby library or college as most, if not all, provides Internet access to the general public free of charge. It would be a tremendous help to the Board if all CMC Members would login at least once, if only to confirm their personal information. The administrative task of managing the ever-changing information of each club member will consequently be simplified thus greatly improving communication amongst the club as a whole. So please, login at your earliest convenience, confirm your information and share your thoughts with fellow CMC members via the new members-only section.

MFC Farm/Campground Discussion

The debate continues. Again, please be sure to read the attached letter regarding the recent opportunity made available to the MFC. Sharing your thoughts and feelings at the monthly meetings or by way of the [Climber's Café](#), a new feature found under [Discussion Groups](#) available to members at www.cmcwebsite.org through the use of a [Member Login](#). The outcome will affect every past, present, and future CMC member, so please get involved.

From:**Chicago Mountaineering Club**

C/O Steve Capps

PO Box 4364

Wheaton, IL 60189-4364

TO:

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL**2003 CMC Board Nominations**

2003 CMC Board Nominations will occur at the November meeting. The board positions include President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Sergeant at Arms, Outings Chairman, Program Chairman, Publication Chairman, Conservation Chairman, Technology Chairman, Grounds Chairman, Safety Chairman, and Expedition Chairman. If you would like to nominate someone for a position, or be nominated, contact Grant Hagberg, Carl Fields, or Jill Quas of the 2003 Board Nomination Committee. All are listed in the Yearbook and/or on line via the [Members Search](#).

CMC Scheduled Meetings**November 18****– Board Member Nominations****December 16****– Board Member Elections****March 29****– CMC Annual Dinner****Chicago Yacht Club's Belmont Station****Guest Speaker - Professor & Climber Jack
Gorby****CMC Scheduled Activities****November 3 – Vertical Endeavors, IL**

(10:00 AM to 6:00 PM)

November 17 – Vertical Endeavors, IL

(10:00 AM to 6:00 PM)

December 1 – Vertical Endeavors, IL

(10:00 AM to 6:00 PM)

December 15 – Vertical Endeavors, IL

(10:00 AM to 6:00 PM)

January 12 – Vertical Endeavors, IL

(10:00 AM to 6:00 PM)

January 26 – Vertical Endeavors, IL

(10:00 AM to 6:00 PM)

Visit www.cmcwebsite.org for the latest information regarding these and other CMC Scheduled Activities.

NEWSLETTER: Please submit your announcements, comments or questions to Steve Capps at PO Box 4364, Wheaton, IL 60189-4364 or phone (630) 327-3283 or e-mail: secretary@cmcwebsite.org (100 words or less please), for possible publication.

Jack Fletcher
 cmclimber@aol.com
 608-968-6962
 October 18, 2002

To the board members of the MFC, and all CMC members:

In the September, 2002 newsletter, MFC board member, Jack Gorby, brought to the attention of the CMC membership a proposal regarding the Baraboo Range Protection Program, and the idea of constructing a new "dream" campground on the property currently referred to as "the farm." I urge all members who've not read Jack's letter to read and consider it carefully. Jack lays out not only the campground proposal, but also gives a brief but informative history of the club, and the "farm property." I have composed this letter in response to Jack's request for a dialogue to be started among the membership over the issues he raises.

When I first read about the proposal, I felt an initial rush of excitement over the opportunity to design our own place, larger, perhaps, and with a few amenities not now available at our current campground, like running water, a small shelter or pavilion, and some sort of upgraded privy. Since then I've done some serious thinking about what this would entail.

It seems to me the question of whether or not to build a "new and improved" campground comes down to need. The needs of the club now, and its future needs. Jack Gorby's letter asks CMC members to consider what they want, and how badly they want it, for the building of, and more importantly, the ongoing maintenance of a larger campground is going to take a sizable, long-term personal commitment from CMC members, as well as a significant budget increase to cover maintenance costs. The distinction between wants and needs is an important one since it goes directly to the heart of his question. To what are CMC members really willing to commit to? As the saying goes, "Our necessities are few, while our wants are endless." And while wants can be fleeting, needs persist. If we are to expect long-term commitments from members, such as the sacrificing of personal time, not to mention climbing time, in order to cut grass, clean-up, affect repairs on equipment, etc., those commitments and sacrifices must be based on a perceived need in order to be long-lasting. If we only want a new campground but don't really need it, enthusiasm for the project will be short-lived, and volunteers in short supply.

Perhaps climbers are, by nature and necessity, minimalists at heart. Our needs are indeed few. When deciding what our needs are as to weekend camping facilities we should start with what we have, then identify any shortcomings and what it would take to rectify them.

Here's a list of possible campground features to consider, the same ones we might look for while travelling:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Location (location, location) | 2. Privacy / peace and quiet | 3. Easy access |
| 4. Facilities (privy, water, showers) | 5. Size / number of level tent sites | 6. Shelter |
| | | 7. Expense |

Additionally, as the owners of the campground, we must consider the following:

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Safety / security | 2. Maintenance costs | 3. Taxes / utilities |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

These lists may not be exhaustive, but they should cover the major components. And while others may rank these features in a different order of importance, I believe that "location" and "peace and quiet" will be near the top of many CMC members' lists of priorities.

If these lists are representative of the major features a desirable campground should have, we can then work through them, item by item, to see how the two areas in question stack up. Here's the way I see it:

- ◆ **Location:** The existing campground is obviously closer to Devil's Lake than the farm. And because Burma Road intersects just outside the southwest entrance to the lake, it's hard to imagine a more desirable location. Still, the farm property is probably "close enough." Aesthetically, it does not thrill me that a crummy bar and a junkyard, and the clientele thereof, would be our closest neighbors. I don't know if they'd be visible from our camp, but any music from the bar would assuredly be within earshot.
- ◆ **Privacy/peace and quiet:** I must confess, this is extremely important to this camper. While many of us come to the lake for the climbing and fellowship with other climbers, the tranquil

camping experience is one that rejuvenates those of us who live in cities and suburbs where traffic and other noise is ubiquitous. Though I have not spent a night camping at the farm, I am very concerned that its close proximity to Hwy 12, less than a half mile as the crow flies, with no intervening hills, will not afford the peaceful solitude one now enjoys at the existing campground. In my experience, about a mile is the absolute minimum distance one needs to be from a busy road in order not to be distracted by road noise. The existing campground has the added advantage of being situated on the other side of a rise in the landscape that acts as an additional sound buffer. It can also be said here that those of us who love to star gaze appreciate the total lack of light pollution (aka total darkness) afforded us at the current campground, due again to being on the other side of the rise. The new location will not have these sound and light buffers.

- ◆ **Easy access:** Getting to the existing campground requires about a three minute trip down Burma road, which connects to South Shore road just outside the southwest entrance to Devil's Lake. Access to the farm would be quite easy as well. If coming from the south (as most of us do) one would simply make a right hand turn off Hwy 12 into the property, then drive a minute or so to reach the woods. However, the trip to Devil's Lake from there would require a difficult left-hand turn onto busy Hwy 12. This may cause some delay, as Hwy 12 is a heavily traveled roadway with a 55-mph speed limit. Traffic volume can only be expected to increase in coming years as highway expansion plans progress. Indeed, we should consider the possibility that if Hwy 12 is converted to a four lane divided highway, a left turn from the farm property will probably no longer be allowed. This means getting to Devil's Lake would require a right hand turn onto Hwy 12 followed by another right onto 59, then right again on South Shore Road. From there one could enter the park through the north entrance or drive around to the southwestern entrance. This would mean a greater travel time than from the existing campground, but not prohibitively so.

- ◆ **Facilities:** *It is a sweltering August night following an equally sweltering day of climbing at the lake. You lie in your tent in a puddle of sweat, your sleeping bag (that you're laying on top of, of course) is stuck to your body like a second skin. Nice cool shower anyone?*

Wouldn't it be nice to have showers at the campground? Sure, who could not want that? But do we really need showers? If having a shower on site was easy I'd say, "why not?" But the fact is, having any sort of conventional shower requires a good deal of infrastructure. Not only is a well required, but power would have to be brought in to operate it. But even more prohibitive is the requirement for a septic system for the showers to drain into, since the DNR is not going to allow soap, shampoo, etc. to drain onto the surface of the property. And need I point out that cool, crystal clear Devil's Lake lies waiting to soothe you after your day of climbing? All you need to do is jump in! If you simply *must* have a conventional shower, there is a brand new shower facility in the group camping area at Devil's Lake.

How about running water? Again, a well and the power to run it would need to be brought in. And although it sounds like it might be a nice convenience, it's not all that difficult to fill a couple of gallon jugs of water in the park, or just bring some water from home. Since most members are only camping for the weekend, a few gallons of water is all that's needed.

The privy is one of those creature comforts we can all agree on, namely, nothing beats a flush toilet. However, to have flush toilets (four would be needed) at our campground requires the same well, power, and septic system mentioned above. Not to mention the maintenance of same. To me, this seems a little over-the-top for a weekend campground. So the question comes down to chemical toilets vs. pit toilets. Currently, the existing campground utilizes simple pit toilets or "outhouses." To point out the obvious, they smell. But they work, and maintenance is negligible. And to some extent, the smell can be minimized using lime (there are also relatively inexpensive solar-powered fans that can be installed that will virtually eliminate the smell). At the current rate of use, new pits are only required to be dug every 2-3 years, or so. And, on occasion, the structure itself needs to be replaced. In the past, Alex has constructed new outhouses at very minimal cost. A chemical toilet uses a similar structure to the outhouse, but instead of sitting atop a pit dug into the ground, the structure sits over a large, concrete vault or tank that is buried so that its top is level with the ground. From an aesthetic standpoint, outhouses and chemical toilets look about the same. Theoretically, a chemical toilet will not smell as bad as an outhouse [they smell like chemicals instead of waste], as long as the chemical

inside the tank is changed frequently enough to keep up with use. Additionally, it is my understanding that the chemical inside the tank needs to be pumped out and refilled every year, regardless of use, as the chemical breaks down over time.

- ◆ **Size of campground:** The age-old question: Does size matter? Well, that depends on what you intend to do with it. Our current campground is about 5 acres, which, in my experience is about all we need. As one who has camped there dozens of times per year, almost every year for the last ten years, I can tell you we have never been short of camping space. Indeed, the area around the fire pit, which could be used for camping if space was really tight, has never seen a tent. Neither has the area to the left of the road, a bit closer to the entrance as you're driving in. In short, the club is not currently in need of any addition camping space. As to future needs, if past is prologue, the same conclusion holds. According to the members who've been around since day one, the current campground, even in its heyday, has accommodated all comers. If any shortcoming can be identified with the existing tent sites, it is that many are not as level as they could be. If members desire, we could work to level them. Volunteers anyone? (I won't hold my breath.)
- ◆ **Shelter:** Personally, I'd like to have access to a small shelter when I come to camp. Not only would it be functional on a rainy day, but would serve as a focal point for the club, a place for members to gather together after a day of climbing to enjoy "happy hour." Needless to say, the existing campground does not now have one, but, importantly, there is room for one near the fire pit, a location that would not subtract from the number of tent sites currently in use. In sum, a new campground is not required if members decide they would like to have a shelter.
- ◆ **Expense:** Camping fees for CMC members have always been quite reasonable. This is due to the fact that maintenance costs at our existing campground are very minimal. We simply do not have much infrastructure or equipment to maintain. At this point, it is unknowable how much fees would have to be raised to cover expenses for upkeep of the proposed new campground, but it seems a given that maintenance costs would be substantially higher (see below).
- ◆ **Safety/security:** Obviously, the CMC has no "security personnel," fortunately there has never been a need. The existing campground is so far off the beaten track few people know it's there. The site is further protected from any would-be trouble makers or vandals by the fact that there's just not much there to mess with or steal. I cannot say whether the farm property would be more visible, and therefore, more prone to mischief than our current location, but this is an issue that should be considered.
- ◆ **Maintenance:** Aside from building a new outhouse occasionally, and repairing or replacing picnic tables, the single largest expense is probably maintaining the gravel road into the campground. Gravel roads are softened up by rain, and in a very short time ruts form. Fortunately, our road is not very long or steep, so the cost of paying a contractor to re-grade it once a year or so, is quite low, a few hundred dollars. In fact, CMC members in the past have occasionally been able to do this job by hand. In contrast, the site of the proposed new campground is such that we would need to maintain a road that is well over one thousand feet in length. Furthermore, because it would be angling across a slope, it would be much more susceptible to damage from rain. This is because water flowing downhill during rain showers increases in speed and in its power to erode. This could be partially controlled with a well built ditch on the uphill side of the road, but a ditch is not a cure-all. And a thousand foot long ditch is a very large maintenance issue in its own right, as they too wash out, and, somehow, need to be mowed (the county uses large truck mounted equipment for this purpose). One need only drive down Burma Road toward the existing campground following a good rain to see the damage done by rain to a gravel road. A road, it should be said, that has existed for many years and thus has an excellent base to withstand damage, yet suffers damage nonetheless. Our new road up to our new campground will be a tremendous challenge and ongoing expense to maintain; it will be like owning Burma road, only we won't have the luxury of county maintenance crews rushing in to repair it after every heavy rainfall. Let us not sugar-coat this issue, or allow wishful thinking to cloud our view; there will be weekends when the new campground will not be accessible due to washouts. And becoming road builders may make us long for the glory days of tree farming.
- ◆ **Taxes/utilities:** Taxes on both properties are quite reasonable and not much at issue for the purposes of this letter. As far as utilities go, the existing campground doesn't have any. As mentioned previously, if we want to outfit the new campground with water, we will need to have

power brought in to operate the well, as well as, presumably, a few lights. I offer no estimate here for our monthly electric bill, only that we would now have one. It is sure to include a charge for basic service, i.e.: we pay for winter months too, even when no one is there.

Regarding what to do with "the farm" if we decide not to move our campground there.

I tend to agree with Jack Gorby that selling the property to a developer would not be in keeping with the spirit of the club. However, I disagree that simply because we allow some trees to be taken, once every several years (as required by our current property tax arrangement) makes us "part of the logging industry," or in any way a party to the negative connotations that go along with the term. And although we're not out to be tree farmers, dealing with the rare necessity of hiring someone to take some trees is not all that difficult; I hereby volunteer to help oversee it.

Alternatively, if members decide a new campground is sorely needed, we could sell the farm property and purchase some land elsewhere that is more suitable for the purpose, i.e.: far from any state highways (noise, light pollution), and not bordering commercial property.

I remain open to accepting the money from the Baraboo Range Protection Program. It may be a good opportunity, new campground or not, but until we have a firm dollar amount, I shall remain undecided. As far as what to do with the money, that's a nice problem to have. We'll think of something worthy to do with it.

Finally, as long as we own the farm property, we ought to use it. I think it would make a perfect place for:

- Those members who occasionally want to bring up large groups of non-climbing, non-members with them.
- Members or groups who want to party or carry-on beyond the limits of "quiet time."
- Members with pets.

The farm property could be used for all these purposes simply by adding an outhouse, and, perhaps, clearing some tent sites. A road would not be necessary for such minimal use; members could drive over the grass as far as possible, then walk the rest of the way in if need be. It's not far to go.

Having laid out the issues as I see them, I am hopeful others too will consider what is at stake, and think carefully and realistically about what's been proposed, and make their feelings known to other club members. I thank Jack Gorby for bringing these issues to the attention of the membership and for his continuing efforts on behalf of the CMC. It's quite possible the club would not exist at all were it not for Jack's legal prowess. And thanks also to all MFC board members, Olle Swartling, Pieter Fockens, Tom Hibbs, and George Pokorny for their continued interest in the CMC.

Personally, I feel that I've already found my "dream campground." Though it's not fancy, it does offer the kind of peaceful solitude that cannot be found elsewhere, not to mention its amazing proximity to Devil's Lake. It offers everything I need for weekend camping, and requires little of me in return. And in these troubled times, I just like knowing the old place is there.

As the saying goes, "You will always have what you want, if you want what you have."

Sincerely, Jack Fletcher
(member since 1993)